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CONTENTS

1. An Interesting Correspondence, . . . REV. JOHN VAN ESS
2. Notes from Muscat, REV. JAMES CANTINE
3. Picnic Among Date Packers, MRS. H. R. L. WORRALL, M.D.
4. Back-yard Touring, D. DYKSTRA
5. Holding On, REV. E. E. LAVY, C.M.S., Baghdad

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NEGLECTED ARABIA.

January - March, 1908.

AN INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

*About an "Alexander the Coppersmith," and How He
Came to Grief.*

REV. JOHN VAN ESS.

About the first of last April Saleem Şahda left Busrah for out-station work at Nasariyeh. He was young and somewhat inexperienced, yet of such good family and training that we had all possible confidence in him. About the middle of October, the fast of Ramadhan set in, and, as all work is slack during that month, and Saleem would doubtless welcome a change from the isolation at Nasariyeh, I determined to recall him to Busrah for a month or two with his family, thinking possibly to replace him with an older man, and one more impervious to homesickness. So a telegram was sent, instructing him to come at once, and to bring his belongings with him. Scarcely had the telegram been put on the wire, when a formidable document was handed in at the door. It read as follows:

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH.

To Van Ess Effendi, American Protestant Society, Busrah, Reverend Sir:

After a presentation of salaams to your honored self, be it known that one, Saleem by name, a book-seller in your employ, has made and is making himself obnoxious to the populace of Nasariyeh. He spends much of his time where men become intoxicated, he is corrupt in life and speech, he never opens his shop nor cares for its interests, withal a few days since attacking your humble servant, tearing his clothes and insulting him with villainous language. Jews and Moslems remonstrate with him, yet he turns a deaf ear to all and pursues his way of folly. We have done our duty in informing you, and in laying the matter before your feet, we trust it may receive your sober attention.

Lieut. _____,

9 Ramadhan 1325.

Muntefik Reserves.

A telegram was at once sent to Lieut. _____ as follows: "Salaams and thanks for information and confidence. Will investigate." We daily expected Saleem to explain himself, but the eighth day a letter came from him, as follows:

IN THE NAME OF GOD.

To my beloved brother in Christ, Rev. Van Ess, may the Lord keep him. Amen.

After a wish of perfect peace and expression of solicitude about your health, I lay before you how astonishment seized me when your message sum-

moned me to Busrah, while the reason is known to me, the accusation of him who loathes me. Moreover, a friend of the accuser announced to me that you had thanked him for the information and are intending my expulsion from the service. Nor did I lend an ear to his word, nor shall I, till I hear from your presence. Inasmuch as the state of affairs had reached that pass I informed Col. ——— and asked of him to satisfy himself impartially of the merits of the case between me and Lieut. ———. He has answered my wishes and has sealed the answer with his seal, all of which you will find enclosed in this letter. I hope and pray the communication may satisfy your mind. Moreover, some of the prominent people of Nasariyeh have of their own accord offered to prepare a testimonial in which you will find a statement of their opinion regarding the said officer, my accuser, also within the letter, sealed with the seal of each.

As to the accusation against me, let me present the matter briefly and plainly. The said officer a month ago entered the Bible shop. Baffled in his purpose of putting me to rout in defending our blessed religion, he has sought opportunity against me ever since. Before a week he entered and cursed me and chided me, and I was compelled in defending myself to strike him.

The learned men of the town blame the officer for his action so that even the public prosecutor when he heard of the matter said of the officer that in speech and deed he is unashamed and corrupt.

When I was brought to the Serai, I sent for the Colonel, who came and demanded that the documents be torn to bits, but they answered: "This is a Christian and that a Moslem, therefore this must be guilty perhaps a little." In his anger the Colonel said: "A Christian! for him I would fell twenty Moslems!" and that in the court-chamber. But the case was a civil one, and the Colonel could do nothing. Thereupon I was committed to prison. I protested that I will find surety until the day of the trial, but they refused me. But after four days I presented a document according to the law of the Ottoman realm, and gave bail and came out. And till now I am continuing my work.

When the officer saw the countenance which was being given me, zeal seized him and he vowed to depose me from my position, and wrote to you, nor do I know what he wrote, save a little, nor does it trouble me, knowing that you will not at once believe him. I do not pretend to represent myself to you as guiltless, nay, rather, I should meekly have borne the attack, but my flesh overcame me and I struck him. I pray you will forgive me. The Kadhi has assured me that my case is plain and easy for me. I am homesick and would like to return to Busrah, but that the cause of truth may be vindicated and the face of our work remain white, I beseech that I may remain here at least till the new year.

May I mention two small incidents? Then I shall seal my letter. A few days ago the son of I ——— came to me in the shop, bearing in his hand a manuscript Arabic grammar. He desired to buy a Bible that he might tear off its cover to cover the grammar. So I replied with all love and kindness that though he pay me a lira I will not sell the Bible for that purpose. He became angry and went away and now rejoices at my difficulty. When I was haled to the court a bystander slandered me, saying: "The curse of God on you." Then laughter took me in my heart, knowing that I am innocent. Another said: "How dared you defend yourself against a Turkish officer, oh, Christian?" I said: "Before the law must be neither Christian nor Moslem." And he was silent. May God bless you and the brethren in Busrah, and the work. Your fellow-worker in the Gospel.

SALEEM.

24 Tishrin I. 1907.

The next communication is in classical Arabic, and written in a beautiful ornamental hand:

IN THE NAME OF GOD.

A DOCUMENT OF TESTIMONY.

Behold we, whose names and seals here follow, inasmuch as love for the stranger within our gates hath entered into our hearts as into a city of refuge, do confess to the exemplary walk of one Saleem, a book-seller, to the integrity of his dealings with men, to his blamelessness in speech and conduct when he riseth up and when he sitteth down. So likewise we testify to his conspicuously excellent breeding, all of which hath effected that he hath earned the good-will of all the populace of the city. Be it known also that regarding the case between him and the Lieut. ———, the transgression was on the part of said officer, in the exceeding length of his tongue times without number, his continual intoxication, his corrupt life, and utter lack of courtesy, all of these have made him to be despised by possessors of knowledge and discernment. Inasmuch as the plaintiff hath intrigued to bring about the deposition of the named Saleem, we have espoused his cause and given him this testimonial to bear in his hand.

15 Ramadhan, 1325.

Seal. Seal. Seal. Seal. Seal.

(All Moslems and persons of influence.)

Among other communications, we present only one more. It also is in Koranic Arabic, and beautiful script:

IN THE NAME OF GOD.

BE IT KNOWN THAT:

The origin of the affair between Saleem, the book-seller and the Lieutenant ——— was in the transgression of the said lieutenant. Inasmuch as mention is made of the said officer, let it be according to truth. He is notorious among us for many reasons, and among them, his intoxication, his corruption, his meanness, and lack of courtesy in speech and character. Moreover, times innumerable, he hath made bold against the said Saleem in speech and action, in the shop so that a coldness arose dating from a month. In the meantime the aforementioned officer determined in his mind to implicate Saleem in iniquity, nor did he find a cause till by trickery and falsehood and intrigue, he seized him by the throat, cursed him, and struck him openly, despising him as a Christian and thinking him of no import. The said Saleem desired deliverance from him, therefore he defended himself, losing his fez. He ran to me with uncovered head and announced what had happened. Therefore I commanded the imprisonment of the lieutenant, but he in the greatness of his impudence, threw the case into the civil court. Then zeal seized of the officer's friends, those who are fanatical in the religion of Islam, and they also intrigued Saleem's downfall. But Allah will deliver him for he is an upright man, as the proverb saith: "*In truth is safety.*" With reference to Saleem's imprisonment it was the result of his refusal to deny that he struck the officer, though in self-defence. Therefore it became necessary that he be arraigned. Of his friends, some advised that he deny, yet he did not consent but replied: "Prison is lighter than falsehood."

I myself testify to the excellent conduct of the said Saleem, his friendliness and gentleness in all of which qualities none hath excelled him. And this cause, too, impelled me with others of the leading people, continually to visit him in

his shop. Inasmuch as the said lieutenant hath lied, and done infamously, I have presented to you the eye of the truth in order that there may accrue no harm to the true and faithful.

COL. _____,

Nasariyeh Reserves,

[SEAL]

15 Ramadhan, 1325.

A few days ago word was received that Saleem was acquitted of the false charge. He has been instructed under no circumstances to seek retribution, nor in word or deed to betray any trace of grudge against his enemies. We thank God that even in Turkey the truth is beginning to be appreciated, and even "in Cæsar's household."

NOTES FROM MUSCAT.

REV. JAMES CANTINE.

The earlier numbers of *NEGLECTED ARABIA* were usually but simple reports of work at each station, and this time I will return to that old custom.

Since our return, August 1st, from our two months' stay at Bahrein, the most important item of mission work has been our tour to Nachl. At our last mission meeting I had obtained permission for Dr. Bennett to stop at Muscat on his way back from vacation in India, and make the first medical tour in inland Oman. Our choice of destination fell upon Nachl, where we have a house, and where our colporteur, Ibrahim, who has been staying there with his family this summer, had been promising the visit of one of our missionary doctors. We were away less than three weeks, as Dr. Bennett's work claimed him at Busrah, but every day of that time was a busy one. Half of it was spent on the road, going and coming.

We had a very pleasant time with one of our friends, the Shiekh of Wady Mu-aw-wal, and with difficulty was he persuaded to let us go on to Nachl. We were several days at each of these large towns, where we could make more of our medical work than we could during our few hours' stay at the various villages on our way. The people were everywhere glad to see a doctor, and our only disappointment was that a number of operations, especially upon the eye, had to be deferred until another time. There was no trouble about holding prayers before the dispensary hour and in gathering good audiences at our Sunday worship. At Wady Mu-aw-wal, Shiekh Nasir, whose guests we were, thought his hospitality required him to furnish a goodly number of listeners, so he sat in a window and hailed all the passers-by up to listen to the Christians' prayers. At our own house in Nachl, the second Sunday, we could observe more decorum, and perhaps those who were present were more edified. In the least count, it is

a great thing to be known as men of prayer by those who are traditionally taught that Christians are unbelievers, who never pray.

On our tours we have proved again and again the possibility and value of brief visits at various places, but until we are more than *one* missionary family at Muscat it scarcely seems possible to remain long away from our work there.

We would not have chosen the month of September for touring had not Dr. Bennett then been passing through. We found it pretty hot and very tiring. Again and again we determined to make it easier the next time, but were never very successful. We travel on donkeys, and this trip we could only hire them from village to village, making it always uncertain what kind of riding animals we would get next, the result of the change generally seeming to be for the worse. We all felt used up on our return. Dr. Bennett and his servant both came down with fever, one of our boys with pneumonia, and my wife has been quite ill from the fatigue of the journey.



TYPES OF ARABS SEEN IN MUSCAT.

A good deal of my time lately has been taken up in superintending the erection of the Peter Zwemer Memorial School. It will be finished before this is read, and will merit fuller description later. It occupies one end of the plot of ground recently purchased from the Sultan, and there is abundant room left for the dispensary, which we hope to build soon. This school building, I am sorry to say, represents about all we have done in the educational line for the past two months. When we went to Bahrein in the summer our school was given up. In fact, nothing of the sort can be carried on in the very hot weather. On our return, we found our teacher considering an offer from the Sultan to come and teach his children in the palace. After taking everything into consideration, we gladly advised him to accept. Since we began educational work, there has been more or less talk at times of rival Mohammedan *high* schools, and once the Sultan built a room and brought a learned moolah from somewhere inland, but his learning was simply Koranic, and, being not at all in sympathy with the enlightened attitude of many of the Muscat residents, he was soon sent away. That the Sultan should have chosen one of our Christian missionary teachers for this position seemed to mean much for us in the future in disarming prejudice, and to overbalance the temporary loss and the difficulty of getting another man down from the North.

Perhaps our readers may remember that in our absence last year on vacation our colporteur, Ibrahim, was recalled by the Sultan from Nachl. This year he has remained there with his family for several months, and, although false complaints have been made against him to the Sultan, no notice has been taken of them, and it seems as if our position now in this inland town was assured. In this town, where half the day only is given to manual work and the other to meeting the various claims of Eastern social life, Ibrahim has used his mornings in having our house thoroughly repaired, until now it attracts universal attention by contrast with its tumble down neighbors. The scripture sales there have also been most encouraging, while here in Muscat Ibrahim's son, Abd Elahid has done good work, and we are hoping that our sales will not fall behind those of '96, our record year.

Mrs. Cantine's medical work among the women was progressing nicely until her trip to Nachl, since when she has been obliged to give it up. The enquirer Hafith, from his little village up the coast, often comes to us for simple remedies, which he dispenses among his neighbors. It is one of our hopes that when we get a medical missionary at Muscat, Hafith and another enquirer, Mirza, will come to us for medical instruction, enough to enable them to help support them-

selves in their own villages, and to accustom the people to our remedies, encouraging them to come to us in serious cases. They both are anxious for this.

Our home life this quarter has been enlivened by the coming of Miss Wilterdink. We missionaries have taken her studies in hand, and perhaps our more lucid explanations of the initial difficulties of Arabic grammar may compensate for the present lack of a good native teacher and prepare her for the hard work of next year. It is a great pleasure to have one of our number with us for this short time.

PICNIC AMONG DATE PACKERS.

MRS. H. R. L. WORRALL, M.D.

Jasamin and her party wished to start before sunrise for their visit to the churdocks (places where the dates are packed), and the boatmen had promised, after extra inducements, to be ready. To show their good intentions, they had given their boat cushions, saying, "Sell them and take another boat if we do not come at the appointed time." But the party waited and waited, and could get no other. Then, finally, one and a half hours after time, the tardy boatmen appeared. It was of no use to grumble, as such instances are common in the East. As the boats were poled against the tide, it took three and a half hours to reach the place. The north wind blew, and that helped them on their journey, but made the water rough. The boatmen regretted not having brought a sail. In the Busrah harbor they first passed a large river steamer from Baghdad, then an English one from London, which would sail for America filled with dates to feed the hungry (for dates) millions there. Then a British India ship from Bombay, then one from Russia, then one from Germany, and others from England, and many small sailing boats. The harbor itself is pretty, but as they went along they greatly enjoyed seeing the date packing places on the banks, set in an almost endless forest of date palms. Some packing places were only open spaces, with mats overhead to protect from the sun, and many with pretty little reed-latticed houses for the ones in charge of the packing. Others where old brick houses were utilized. But here, there and everywhere in sight were the date palms, some stripped already of their luscious fruit, but many still in their full glory, bearing great golden and brown clusters, drooping with their own weight.

Some trees of giant height, some no taller than a camel; but many of these also with a goodly allowance of beautiful fruit. Others with no fruition yet, but with their grace of form and beauty of green color-



PACKING DATES, BUSRAH.

ing, in the mellow sunshine, formed a picture never to be forgotten, and, in its way, vieing with any gardens in the world. Mile after mile of these lovely groves were passed, with pretty reed cottages here and there. The only things to mar the pleasure were when the boatmen, becoming very careless, almost got in the track of a passing steamer, and at another time so near a steam launch that its waves came into the boat and over Jasamin's dress. On their arrival, they were warmly greeted by Niema and Hyatt. They kissed Jasamin on both cheeks, and said, "How are you? It is good that you have come. Oh! My heart! Oh, my eye! How are all your people at home and all the neighbors?" Arab coffee was at once served by a man, whose sole business was to serve cups of coffee. He had in his right hand a brass coffee pot with a spout somewhat like the beak of a pelican, and in his left hand a small tray with cups holding two tablespoons. This was served with our sugar or milk. After a short time tea was prepared, and with it they ate the large round pieces of Arab bread. It was two o'clock, or nine o'clock Arabic, before the mid-day meal was served, so they had quite an appetite and did full justice to the rice, meat cooked with egg-plant, vegetable marrow cooked with meat and seasoned with tomato sauce, curried fish, and, finally, muskmelon.

After enjoying the bounteous repast and resting a little till it became cooler, they went down to see the date packing. Under all the porticos were men, women, boys and girls seated on clean mats diligently selecting the best dates, from boxes in which they had been

loosely thrown. These they laid one by one in regular rows in the boxes sent from Norway for the purpose. One quick-fingered girl was able to pack seven boxes a day, although she was not well. Another, an old woman, could only finish one and a half. Each was to receive two cents a box for the packing. So none cou'd grow very rich at the work, although what they received no doubt meant a great deal to them. The dates not good enough for packing were set aside, and later taken upstairs and dried in the sun, to be packed in baskets or to be cooked and dried, and of some date syrup would be made. While they were standing watching the packing, the hamals (men who carried the dates from the boats to the packers) brought a special kind of dates, and, on perceiving this, a large number of the packers ran to fill their boxes with the kind which were easier to pack. But the heavy stick applied on the back of a few dispersed them quickly to their work. The whole court had hundreds and hundreds of boxes filled with dates brought from the surrounding groves in large boats, such as were used perhaps in St. Paul's time.

After seeing the packing process, they went to visit some of the women living on the place, and Jasamin's heart glowed with love for Christ, as she told them of the birth of Jesus, and that He gave His life for them. Then she told them of Joseph in Egypt. Some seemed to listen, and others were indifferent. Then one stopped her and asked if she was married, and why not, and could not understand when she said she did not wish to have a husband. Among them, all but very little girls are either married, divorced or widows. But few women are not divorced once or more. Then they asked where she bought the cloth for her dress, and how much it cost, and won't she give them a dress? But she brings them again and again back to the subject, and asks if they would not like to buy some Gospels that would tell them all about Jesus. At first they are indifferent and afraid to take any, then one person gets courage to take one, and then others wish them, especially some men, who were near listening. Only one or two of the women and girls could read; but others had some one in the family who could read for them. One man, named Mohammed (after their false prophet), asked for a whole Bible, and it was given him. He clasped it to his heart and was very pleased, and said he would read it all. As she departed, all said, "Do come every day and talk to us."

The long, hot day finally drew to a close, and as it neared sunset the packers gradually stopped their work and repaired to the mat huts, which had been set up temporarily for their use. Soon the smoke of the camp fires arose, and the women began to bake the Arab bread and some cooked rice for the evening meal. One poor

creature, who had a sick boy of ten years old, and a little one of four, had to pound her rice first, then clean it, and later cook it. It would probably not be ready for hours, and the sick boy whined and cried piteously. But she gave him a little of the remains of the morning meal, and he ate it, and lay down on a dirty piece of sacking and was soon asleep. Their hut was not yet built, and their sole possessions did not cover as much space as one's two arms could span. The Arabs, having had their food, sent to ask if the visitors would not like to see them enact the scene of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. All said, "Yes," so thirty or more of them, grouping together in rows of five or six, with the right hand of the ones behind on the shoulders of those in front, they went back and forth, back and forth, at a half-run (trot), shouting a sing-song sort of cry, which none of us understood. There was not much variety in the entertainment, except that it was unique in its way. We soon wearied of it, and felt that after their hard day's work the people needed to rest. While they were rejoicing, two brothers had been quarreling over a bundle of wood. After all the others had gone to sleep the bitter words kept up, until finally words led to blows, and the ever-ready Arab dagger was drawn, and brother smote brother on the face. The whole camp was roused, and there was much excitement and shouting. It was unwise for outsiders to interfere. Fortunately, the case was not serious. All the party again repaired to their beds on the roof top, where only the cool breeze permitted sleep.

Next morning they heard of an old man who had had fever, and the usual Arab remedy (that of burning) was used, and he was burned on the head, and from this grew very weak and died that morning. Oh, the mourning that went on! They all beat their chests and wailed, "Oh, Fatama! Oh, Fatama!" His wife, especially when people were looking, beat her chest and twisted her body, as if writhing in an agony of grief; but when she saw no one was looking she ceased entirely. Those not related to the deceased were entirely indifferent. Soon sad thoughts were all dispersed by the sight of the Tabaristan, a boat laden with dates for America, steaming by at full speed, and the whole party rose and waved and waved their handkerchiefs, and tears of joy came in the eyes of those who thought of the time when they, too, would again see those dear shores, and greet the loved ones once more. But time was flying and work was waiting to be done, so Jasamin and the others bade a hearty adieu to the friends who had made their visit possible, and who had so kindly entertained them, giving them of the little they had so freely and generously. They gave her food for the journey and clusters of special brands of dates, some of which were for herself and some

for their neighbors. Jasamin kissed Niema and Hyatt on both cheeks, and clasped their hands and said, ("I go") "In the faith of God," and they said, "With our salaams (peace)." "God go with you, God strengthen you." "Give our salaams to your mother and all your family and all the neighbors." "May God strengthen you. May God bless you." So with all these blessings, no dangers befell them on their return journey, and all at home rejoiced at their safe arrival.

BACK-YARD TOURING.

D. DYKSTRA.

The question a returned Arabian missionary, visiting the Western churches, is apt to be greeted with more than any other is, "Verbouwen ze d'r ook tarwe?" Similarly in Turkish Arabia, the inevitable question is, "Have you a river as good as ours?" And, to be sure, a journey on the majestic river of antiquity, winding in and out among the limitless gardens of date palms, arouses a past and present interest that is surpassed not even by the glamour of a steamer trip from New York to Albany.

But the passenger on the swift and comfortable British India mail-boat fails to notice at least two things, and these are the real length of the winding river and the innumerable Arab villages hid in the dense gardens of palms. To become more intimately acquainted with this part of the river country, to give the testimony of the Gospel, and, withal, to profit by the change, we decided to erect our hut for some weeks at the date-packing centre of Ras Muamar, about ten miles from Fao, and fifty miles from Busrah.

We arrived on Friday, spent the next day in putting up our huts, and on the Sabbath rested, according to the commandment. Early on the morning of this day, the Arabs of the place began to call on us. Among others, came a religious teacher, a mullah, who remained for a two hours' controversy with Mr. Van Ess on the claims of Christianity. This mullah had evidently read the Gospels, and was well posted on the usual objections to our religion. He came every day during our three weeks' stay at the place, and when we left promised to call on us at Busrah.

One of the sheikhs of the place announced his coming by "sending before him" a present of a quantity of dates, bread, milk and butter. He often went out of his way to show us favors, and continually urged us to come and visit him and enjoy his hospitality. One evening he asked us to bring our magic lantern to entertain his people, and it was certainly very interesting to see the motley crowd



CAMP AT MUAMAR.

of forty Arabs, sitting about on the ground and gazing intently at the shifting scenes. That evening the sheikh accompanied us on our way back, and, before leaving us, asked for a copy of the Scriptures, which, he said, his mullah was to read to his council during the long winter evenings. Although this man had the truth told him in uncompromising form, he has since called on us in Busrah, and shown his desire to keep up the good-will existing between us.

One Saturday afternoon we were invited to make a call on a chief, who was said to live "just around the corner," at Dawasir. Although the sun was still intensely hot when we started, it had set long before we ever got around the bend with our little row-boat. While the fatted calf was being slaughtered, the time was spent in talking about dates and religion. At about 11 P. M. the food was brought, and, with a loud "Bismillah," we were asked to pitch in. The rest of the night was spent in getting back, and the sun had risen on Sunday morning before we came back to our camp at Muamar.

Mr. Van Ess also had occasion to visit the sheikh residing at Kat'ah, as well as the ruling Arab chief near Fao. Thus the principal men of the Arabs between Mohammerah and Fao were visited, and, we trust, doors were opened for the entrance of the Gospel.

Our time was largely spent in visiting and entertaining Arabs of every class, and, incidentally, we were able to learn a great deal

of how these date-farms are rented and worked, and how the dates are gotten ready for the markets of London and New York. These date-packing stations present ideal opportunities for selling Scriptures, as may be seen from the fact that when two of our colporteurs reached us from Busrah, they had sold on their way nearly five hundred Scriptures. May the Word that never returns void exert here also its saving influence.

The Turkish officials evidently did not like our friendly relations with the Arabs, and tried their best to make us break up camp. They complained against us to the authorities, and, upon our return to Busrah, we found waiting for us a letter sent to the American Consular Agent by H. E., the Vali of Busrah. Its main charge was that "Mr. Van Ess, with his friend, Mr. Dykstra, of the Protestant Mission, have gone to Muamar district, where they have begun preaching to the Arabs about religious matters, and distributing books of a religious nature." And its request was: "For preventing any trouble arising from the action of these gentlemen, I beg you will kindly write and ask them to return to Busrah as quickly as possible."

It is needless to say that this will in no wise hinder or retard the Gospel work there in the future, as no preaching was done, except in our own hut, and no books were distributed except such as bear the stamp of the Turkish Government—all Scriptures. On the contrary, we feel very much encouraged to continue our efforts among these people, as they are not severely prejudiced and are easily accessible by boat along the river. With a small motor launch at his service, a missionary stationed at Busrah could find boundless opportunity for spreading the Word among the thousands of date farmers along the rivers and creeks of Busrah.

Of late we have heard much about the keel that never became a ship, and whose usefulness is limited to the realm of oratory. An ardent admirer of the past could give no better evidence of his desire to honor the mission spirit of the fathers of '47 than by perpetuating the memory of the keel by a serviceable motor boat for touring at Busrah station. The missionaries at Busrah spend, or should spend, nearly half of their time on the water, and this year they have traveled on the Euphrates and its branches about 4,000 miles. The greater part of this is done in slow and dangerous sail-boats or canoes. The work would be greatly expedited by a swift and safe kerosene motor-boat, not dependent on wind and weather.

"HOLDING ON," OR OUR POSITION IN TURKISH ARABIA.

BY REV. E. E. LAVY,

Church Missionary Society, Baghdad.

When Mr. Van Ess asked me for a short article on the position and work of the Church Missionary Society in Turkish Arabia, I was only too ready to agree to write the following for two reasons:

Firstly, because we feel that we are really one with the American Arabian Mission. Our purpose is the same, the evangelization of Arabia and direct work among Moslems.

Secondly, because we need all the interest and prayer that can be given. So little is known of even the position of Baghdad and Mosul that, generally, people think we are in Persia. This being so, is it to be wondered at that the mission is in the condition that it is?

A word as to the stations. The oldest station is Baghdad, which has been occupied for about twenty-five years. This town, situated on the Tigris, about five hundred miles above Busrah, our most easily accessible neighbor, is one of the chief entrances into Arabia. It is the great centre of numerous caravan routes—caravans, large and small, passing constantly between it and Syria, Armenia, Persia and Central Arabia.

The population, with its two suburbs, probably reaches a quarter of a million, while at all times during the year thousands of Shiah pilgrims pass through to visit their sacred cities of Kerbela, Nejf, Samarra and the mosque of Kadhimain. The two former of these towns, having a population of about 70,000 and 50,000, respectively, are within one day's journey by cart. And, strange though it may seem, they influence, through the great Mujtahids, the political and religious situation in Persia more than any of the Shah's own cities.

The nearest missionary stations are Busrah, 500 miles to the south; Mosul, ten days' journey to the north (this belongs to the C. M. S.); Damascus, twenty-five days by caravan to the northwest, and Hamadan (Armenian), about fifteen days by caravan to the northeast. Thus we see what a huge field there is for the missionaries of Baghdad to cover.

There is no need for me to remind you of the difficulties of work in this land. Your own mission being similarly situated, but it can hardly be doubted that the Irak, or Turkish Arabia, with its bigoted and bitter Mohammedanism and the Turkish rule, is the most difficult field at present occupied for missionary efforts anywhere to be found.

Our agencies are: Medical work, school, bookshop and visiting. Think, Baghdad, Kerbela, Nejf, all to be reached, and the country



REV. E. E. LAVY, WIFE AND SISTER, C. M. S., BAGHDAD.

around, what a staff is needed. Look at our number. At present we are three, my wife, sister and myself.

The medical work has now been closed for over two years, barring a period of seven months, when one of our Palestine doctors visited us. What a sight the out-patient days are, when the dispensary is opened. I have known days in which more than two hundred would-be patients were turned away, because of the impossibility of the doctor's coping with the work. And the surgical work that has been done is so varied that it would rejoice the heart of any surgeon. What an influence it has! Fancy all these hearing the plain Gospel! Often we have had patients who have traveled for one month, and I have seen several who have come from the centre of Arabia. And now all this is closed because we have no man. Our last doctor broke down in three years, and our visitor from Palestine felt worn out in seven months of solid and endless work.

Then we have the school and congregation of about 100, with bookshop, and one clergyman to superintend all, as well as having the secretarial work and books of the mission in his hands. Moreover, as there is no pastor in Mosul, he has to pay occasional visits there.

Is it to be wondered at if there is not much time for study or laying himself out to get among and know numbers who are not reached by these agencies? My sister, it is true, is able to do a fair amount among the women, but as her language examination is still before her, she has to study.

The remaining member of the staff is my wife, a recruit of eight months' standing.

A look at Mosul shows us a town of 80,000 souls, the centre of thousands of Arabs, and a centre from which to reach the Kurdish tribes. Here we have a medical missionary and native assistant, a nurse, and lady for school work, but no parson or other male missionary, who can follow up the work, itinerate, etc. A question: "Do you think this part of Arabia can be evangelized with such numbers?"

What a field! What opportunities! Do not talk of difficulties. These should warm us to the work. There is so much to be done that can be done outside of these.

The C. M. S. is not your society. Baghdad and Mosul are not your stations. True, but Christ wants Arabia, and Arabia wants Christ, and we are trying to satisfy them both, and hanging on for that reason.

What are you doing? What will you do?

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